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(54) Title: ASSEMBLY METHOD UTILIZING DISPLAY INFORMATION, AND ASSEMBLY FABRICATED BY THE AS-SEMBLY METHOD

(54) 発明の名称: 表示情報を利用した組み立て方法及び当該組み立て方法により組み立てられたアッセンブリ

(57) Abstract: A method of fabricating an assembly having a cell structural body stored and held in a metal container through a compressive material by disposing the compressive material having a cushioning capability in compressed state between the outer peripheral part of the cell structural body and the tubular metal container and adding a compressive surface pressure to the cell structural body through the compressive material so as to hold the cell structural body in the metal container, comprising the steps of displaying the information on the thickness and/or volume density of the compressive material on the surface thereof before proceeding to the assembly process and, in the assembly process, reading the information and, based on the information, selecting the cell structural body, metal container, and compressive material for proper holding requirements, whereby the proper state of the cell structural body without causing any damage can be easily provided by suppressing, if any, the effect of a variation in the outside dimensions of the members of the cell structural body forming the assembly.

(57) 要約:

セル構造体の外周部と筒状の金属容器との間にクッション性を有する圧縮性材料を圧縮状態で配し、前記セル構造体へ前記圧縮性材料を介して圧縮面圧を付与することで、前記セル構造体を前記金属容器内に把持することにより、セル構造体を圧縮性材料を介して金属容器内に収納把持したアッセンブリを組み立てる方法である。組み立て工程に入る前に予め前記圧縮性材料の厚み及び/又は嵩密度に関する情報をその材料表面上に表示しておき、組み立て工程において、前記情報を読み取り、その情報に基づいて、適切な把持条件となるセル構造体と金属容器と圧縮性材料を選び出す。アッセンブリを構成するセル構造体等の部材の外形寸法などにバラツキがあっても、その影響を抑え、セル構造体の破損等の無い適切な把持状態が容易に得られる。

明 細 書

表示情報を利用した組み立て方法及び当該組み立て方法により組み立てられたアッセンブリ

技術分野

本発明は、セル構造体を圧縮性材料を介して金属容器内に収納把持したアッセンブリを組み立てる方法に関し、更に詳しくは前記アッセンブリを構成する部材の表面に固有情報を表示しておき、当該固有情報を利用して、適切な組み合わせ条件となる部材同士によるアッセンブリの組み立てを行う方法に関する。本発明は、内燃機関の排気ガス浄化用、脱臭用触媒担体又はフィルター、あるいは触媒作用を利用する化学反応機器、例えば燃料電池用改質器等に用いられる触媒用担体又はフィルターなどに適用することができる。

背景技術

内燃機関の排ガス浄化や触媒作用を利用する化学反応機器のために用いられる 触媒コンバータ、あるいはフィルター、熱交換器等の用途に使用されるアッセン ブリとして、セル構造体と筒状の金属容器(缶体)との間に、クッション性を有 する圧縮性材料を配し、セル構造体へ圧縮性材料を介して所定の圧縮面圧を付与 することにより、セル構造体を金属容器内に把持収納(キャニング)したものが 知られている。

例えば、このようなアッセンブリを自動車排ガス浄化用の触媒コンバータとして用いる場合には、セル構造体の一種であるセラミック製ハニカム状構造体に、 触媒成分として白金、パラジウム、ロジウム等の貴金属を分散担持したものを、 セラミックマット等を介して金属容器(缶体)内に収納把持して排気系に搭載する。

セル構造体は、前述のようにその外周面に圧縮面圧を付与されることにより金 属容器内に把持されるため高い強度を持つことが好ましいが、自動車排ガス浄化 用の触媒担体として用いられるハニカム状構造体などにおいては、浄化性能向上のためセル隔壁の薄壁化が進行しており、これに伴い強度レベルが低下しつつある。

セル構造体の強度は、「アイソスタティック破壊強度試験」で測定することができる。これは、ゴムの筒状容器にセル構造体を入れてアルミ製板で蓋をし、水中で等方加圧圧縮を行う試験で、コンバータの缶体にセル構造体が外周面把持される場合の圧縮負荷加重を模擬している。アイソスタティック強度は、担体が破壊した時の加圧圧力値で示され、社団法人自動車技術会発行の自動車規格JASO規格M505-87で規定されている。

一般的に、自動車排ガス浄化用コンバータの触媒担体として用いられるセラミック製のハニカム状構造体は、セル隔壁厚さが 0. 1 1 mm以下でかつ開口率が 8 5 %を越えると、アイソスタティック強度を 1 0 k g/c m²以上に維持することが非常に困難となることが判ってきた。

キャニング設計時に設定した設計面圧よりも高い面圧が実際のキャニングで発生した場合に、セル構造体のアイソスタティック強度を越えるようであれば、その個所で構造体が破損してしまう危険がある。セル構造体のセル隔壁厚さが薄くなり、構造体強度レベルが低くなるに従い、設計面圧を下げることが必要であるが、実際のキャニング面圧の異常上昇を抑え、面圧の変動をできる限り小さくしてやることが必要になる。設計面圧と実際の面圧が等しければ狙い通りのキャニング設計が可能で理想的である。

更に、セル構造体の外形精度に起因して、セル構造体とそれを収容する金属容器との間のギャップが一定でないことが原因で、セル構造体の外周部に作用する 圧縮圧力が均一にならず、部分的に大きな把持面圧が作用することで、セル構造体を破損する可能性がある。

一方で、面圧を下げ過ぎると、実使用環境下で高温排ガス流れや振動を受けることにより、金属容器内にセル構造体を把持しておくことができなくなるため、必要最低面圧が存在する。セル構造体の隔壁厚さが薄くなるに従って、セル構造体のアイソスタティック強度レベルが低下するので、セル構造体を把持する圧縮

面圧も、セル構造体把持に必要な最低面圧を保持しながらできる限り低くする必要があり、圧縮面圧のレベルが低くなるに従って、面圧のバラツキも小さくする、即ちより均一な面圧分布にする必要がある。

セル構造体を金属容器内に適切な状態で収納把持するためには、セル構造体、 圧縮性材料、金属容器各部品の寸法形状のバラツキをできるだけ小さくすること が望ましい。しかしながら、前記のような触媒担体として用いられるセラミック 製のハニカム状構造体は、押し出し成形後に、そのまま乾燥され、所定の長さに 加工された後に、焼成された状態のままで金属容器内に収納されるので、ハニカ ム状構造体の外径寸法は、成形、乾燥、焼成の全ての工程における寸法変動や変 形が加算された状態となり、金属加工部材などに較べて非常に大きな寸法形状の バラツキを有している。そのため、金属容器内にセラミック製ハニカム状構造体 を収納する場合において、ハニカム状構造体外径寸法のバラツキの影響を如何に して小さく抑えるかが課題となっている。

本発明は、上記した従来の問題に鑑みてなされたものであり、セル構造体を圧縮性材料を介して金属容器内に収納把持したアッセンブリを組み立てる際に、当該アッセンブリを構成するセル構造体等の部材の外形寸法などにバラツキがあっても、その影響を抑え、セル構造体の破損等の無い適切な把持状態が容易に得られるような組み立て方法を提供することを目的とする。

発明の開示

本発明によれば、セル構造体の外周部と筒状の金属容器との間にクッション性を有する圧縮性材料を圧縮状態で配し、前記セル構造体へ前記圧縮性材料を介して圧縮面圧を付与することで、前記セル構造体を前記金属容器内に把持することにより、セル構造体を圧縮性材料を介して金属容器内に収納把持したアッセンブリを組み立てる方法において、組み立て工程に入る前に予め前記圧縮性材料の厚み及び/又は嵩密度に関する情報をその材料表面上に表示しておき、組み立て工程において、前記情報を読み取り、その情報に基づいて、適切な把持条件となるセル構造体と金属容器と圧縮性材料を選び出すことを特徴とする組み立て方法(

第1発明)、が提供される。

更に、本発明によれば、前記組み立て方法により組み立てられたアッセンブリ (第2発明)、が提供される。

発明を実施するための最良の形態

前述のように、触媒コンバータ等に使用される、セル構造体を圧縮性材料を介して金属容器内に収納把持したアッセンブリは、セル構造体の外周部と筒状の金属容器との間にクッション性を有する圧縮性材料を圧縮状態で配し、セル構造体へ圧縮性材料を介して圧縮面圧を付与することで、セル構造体を金属容器内に把持することにより組み立てられる。

第1発明は、このようなアッセンブリの組み立て方法において、組み立て工程に入る前に予め前記圧縮性材料の厚み及び/又は嵩密度に関する情報をその材料表面上に表示しておき、組み立て工程において、前記情報を読み取り、その情報に基づいて、適切な把持条件となるセル構造体と金属容器と圧縮性材料を選び出すことを特徴とする。

セル構造体の面圧に影響を与える要素としては、セル構造体や金属容器の寸法の他に、両者の間に配置される圧縮性材料の厚み及び/又は嵩密度が挙げられるが、前記のように当該材料表面上に表示したそれらに関する情報から、それぞれ適切な寸法の組み合わせとなるセル構造体と金属容器と圧縮性材料を選び出すことにより、金属容器に収納把持されたセル構造体には適切な範囲で面圧が付与される。

第1発明において、情報の表示形式には文字やバーコードを用いることができる。情報は、インク塗布、レーザー、スタンプによる押印(スタンピング)等により表示することができる。また、情報をラベルに印刷して、そのラベルを材料表面上に貼付するようにしてもよい。インクにより情報を表する場合は、インクジェット方法又は熱転写方法を用いることが好ましい。

クッション性を有する圧縮性材料としては、金属製ワイヤメッシュ、セラミック繊維とバーミキュライトで構成される加熱膨張性マット、セラミック繊維を主

成分としバーミキュライトを含まない非加熱膨張性マットからなる群より選ばれた1種の材料又は2種以上の複合材料が好ましい。

特に、セル構造体が薄壁構造である場合には、アルミナ、高アルミナ、ムライト、炭化珪素、窒化珪素、ジルコニア、チタニア等のセラミック繊維を主成分とし、バーミキュライトのような加熱性膨張材料を含まない非加熱膨張性マットを用いると、実用温度範囲内においてセル構造体外周部に作用する圧縮力が大きく変動せず、しかもセル構造体外周部全体に圧縮力が実質的に均一に作用するので好ましい。

金属容器内へのセル構造体の収納、及びセル構造体へ圧縮性材料を介して圧縮 面圧を付与する方法としては、クラムシェル方法、押し込み方法、巻き絞め方法 、スウェージング方法、及び回転鍛造方法のうちのいずれかの方法を用いること が好ましい。

セル構造体としては、複数の隔壁により形成された複数のセル通路を有するハニカム状構造体であって、セル隔壁厚さが 0. 11mm以下、開口率が 85%以上であるものが好ましい。更に、ハニカム状構造体としては構造体の周囲にその外径輪郭を形成する外壁を有し、その外壁厚さが少なくとも 0. 05mmであるものが好ましい。なお、本発明において用いるセル構造体としては、前記のようなハニカム状構造体のほか、フォーム状構造体であってもよい。

セル構造体は、コージェライト、アルミナ、ムライト、リチウム・アルミニウム・シリケート、チタン酸アルミニウム、チタニア、ジルコニア、窒化珪素、窒化アルミニウム及び炭化珪素からなる群より選ばれた1種のセラミック材料又は2種以上のセラミック材料の複合物からなることが好ましい。また、活性炭、シリカゲル及びゼオライトからなる群より選ばれた1種の吸着材料からなるものも好適に使用できる。

なお、押出し成形により作製されるハニカム状構造体のセル形状には、三角形、四角形、六角形、丸形などがあり、一般的には、四角形状の一つである正方形のセルを持つものが多く利用されているが、最近は六角形のセルを持つハニカム 状構造体も利用が進んでいる。 触媒コンバータとして使用する場合には、セル構造体に触媒成分を担持する必要があり、通常は、セル構造体に触媒成分を担持した後に、そのセル構造体を金属容器内に収納把持するが、セル構造体を金属容器内に収納把持した後に、そのセル構造体に触媒成分を担持するようにしてもよい。

第2発明は、前記第1発明に係る方法により組み立てられたアッセンブリであり、前述のように、セル構造体が適切な圧縮面圧で金属容器内に把持されているので、自動車排ガス浄化用触媒コンバータなどの用途に好適に利用できる。

なお、アッセンブリは、複数のセル構造体を、セル通路方向に沿って1つの金属容器内にクッション性を有する圧縮性材料を介して直列に配列した構造となっていてもよい。また、1つのセル構造体を1つの金属容器内にクッション性を有する圧縮性材料を介して収納把持したアッセンブリを複数個、セル構造体のセル通路方向に沿って、1つの金属外筒内に直列に配列して用いてもよい。ただし、本発明においては、個々のハニカム状構造体の外径寸法に応じて、金属容器寸法を変えているので、これらの金属容器を複数個つなぐ場合には、できるだけサイズの近いもの同士を繋ぐことが望ましい。

(実施例) 以下、セル構造体としてハニカム状構造体を用いて触媒コンバータを作製する場合を例に、本発明を更に詳細に説明するが、本発明はこれらの実施例に限定されるものではない。

圧縮性材料へ文字やバーコードなどの情報を表示する方法としては、インクジェット印字装置による方法とレーザー装置による方法が印字速度が速く非接触であり、多量部材を処理する上で望ましい。特にレーザーによる表示方法は、インクを必要とせず、予め前処理も不要なので、メンテナンスの観点からインクジェット方法よりも好ましい。

圧縮性材料の嵩密度検査は、製造工程の最後に行われるが、例えばインクジェットで情報を表示する場合は、そこで検査測定された嵩密度情報がインクジェット印字装置に直接に伝達されるようにしておく。

以下にインクジェットで情報を表示する場合の条件の一例を記す。また、参考

として、スタンピングとラベル貼付により情報を表示する場合の条件の一例も併せて記す。

[インクジェットの例]

- ・インクジェット装置: イマージェ社S4プラス
- ・インクの種類:

耐熱性インク (常温:こげ茶色、熱処理後:橙色)

圧縮性材料:

セラミック繊維を主成分とした非加熱膨張性マット

・圧縮性材料に載せる情報の形態:

数字

・圧縮性材料に載せる情報:

圧縮性材料の嵩密度

[スタンピングの例]

- ・インク成分:
 - ①インク顔料

酸化コバルト(CoO)、酸化クロム(Cr_2O_3)、酸化鉄(Fe_2O_3)微粉末40%(色は常温・熱処理後も黒色)

- ②合成樹脂50%
- ③水10%
- · 圧縮性材料:

セラミック繊維を主成分とした非加熱膨張性マット

・ 圧縮性材料に載せる情報の形態:

数字

・圧縮性材料に載せる情報:

圧縮性材料の嵩密度

[ラベル貼付の例]

・プリンター:

イマージェ社S4プラス

・インクの種類:普通インク(黒色)

· 圧縮性材料:

セラミック繊維を主成分とした非加熱膨張性マット

- ・圧縮性材料に載せる情報の形態: バーコード(数字併記)
- ・圧縮性材料に載せる情報:

圧縮性材料の嵩密度

キャニング工程では、予め、ハニカム状構造体の外径寸法や圧縮性材料の厚み及び/又は嵩密度情報の載っているバーコードや数字がバーコードリーダー等で読み取られる。その読み取られた寸法情報は、金属容器の製造ラインに瞬時に伝達される。金属容器は、薄い金属板を所定寸法になるようにプレス治具を使って丸めて、繋ぎ目を溶接により接合して缶体に形成される。この缶体製造装置に前記の情報が伝達されて、その情報に基づいて缶体の寸法が決定される。このようにして、ハニカム状構造体と金属容器(缶体)の間のクリアランスが制御され、最適な組み合わせが実現される。

ハニカム状構造体と金属容器の間に介在する圧縮性材料の嵩密度によっても面 圧が変動するので、ハニカム状構造体と金属容器間のクリアランスと圧縮性材料 の嵩密度の最適な組み合わせが得られるように、ハニカム状構造体のバーコード 情報に基づいて、金属容器と圧縮性材料を選定することもできる。

文字情報をインクジェット方法あるいはレーザーマーキング方法等により印字した場合、印字された文字情報はCCDカメラで撮影され、パターンマッチング方法で認識される。この方法は予め文字を登録しておき、撮影した文字の濃淡情報から登録した文字にもっとも近いパターンを選択する方法である。本発明者らは、先のレーザーマーキング方法で表記された外径寸法と質量の数字情報についてオムロン製F350画像認識装置で読み取りを行い、間違いなく情報伝達ができることを確認した。

バーコードリーダーの読み取り原理は、レーザー光をバーコードラベル上に照射して、その乱反射光をバーコードリーダーの受光部で受光する。その乱反射光はスペースとバーの反射率の差により強弱が発生するので、これをON/OFFのデジタル信号に変換することで、スペースとバーを判別して読み取っている。したがって、バーコードでも乱反射光の強弱の差(PCS)が小さくなってしまう場合には、バーコードリーダーでの読み取りが困難となるので、前述の画像認識処理方法が有効となる。

一般的なキャニングの方法としては、クラムシェル方法、押し込み方法、あるいは巻き絞め方法のうちのいずれかの方法が用いられる。また、この他に、金属塑性加工技術を応用し、金属容器の外径寸法を外部からタップ(加圧型)を介して圧縮圧力を加えることにより絞る方法(スウェージング方法)も行われている

更には、金属容器を回転させながら、その外周面を加工治具を用いて塑性加工により絞り込む方法(いわゆる回転鍛造方法)で、金属容器の外径を絞り、面圧を付与することも可能である。この方法を利用すれば、最近行われている缶体の両端をスピニング加工により絞り込んでコーン形状にすることとの組み合わせで、一貫した加工ラインでキャニングからコーン形成までが可能となる。

前記クラムシェル方法、押し込み方法、巻き絞め方法は、それぞれ、予めハニカム状構造体に圧縮弾性把持材(圧縮性材料)を巻いておくもので、クラムシェル方法は、それを2分割された金属容器で負荷を与えながら挟み込み、それらの合わせ面(つば)の個所を溶接することで一体化容器とする。押し込み方法は、ガイドを利用して一体金属容器内に圧入する。巻き絞め方法は、金属容器となる金属板を巻き付けて引っ張ることで面圧を付与し、金属板の合わせ部を溶接して固定する。

クラムシェル方法によれば、上下面から金属容器で押え込む際にマット(圧縮性材料)のズレが起こり、押し込み方法では、金属容器に挿入する際に挿入側でマットのズレが起こる。このため、ズレた部位が広範囲に及ぶと全体的にも面圧が高くなってしまう。

面圧を付与するのに適した方法は、できる限りマットと金属容器との相対的な位置のズレを起こさないで、金属容器内においてハニカム状構造体に面圧を付与して把持することである。この観点から、巻き絞め方法、スウェージング方法、及び回転鍛造方法は、面圧を付与する前に、予め缶体が圧縮性材料で包まれたセル構造体を取り囲んだ状態となっているので、缶体と圧縮性材料との相対的な位置のズレが小さく、望ましいものである。なお、押し込み方法は、ハニカム状構造体を缶体内に配置する方法としてのみ利用し、面圧を付与する手段にはスウェージング方法あるいは回転鍛造方法を用いることも可能である。

産業上の利用可能性

以上説明したように、本発明によれば、セル構造体を圧縮性材料を介して金属容器内に収納把持したアッセンブリを組み立てる際に、当該アッセンブリを構成するセル構造体等の部材の外形寸法などにバラツキがあっても、その影響を抑え、セル構造体の破損等の無い適切な把持状態が容易に得られる。

請 求 の 範 囲

1. セル構造体の外周部と筒状の金属容器との間にクッション性を有する圧縮性材料を圧縮状態で配し、前記セル構造体へ前記圧縮性材料を介して圧縮面圧を付与することで、前記セル構造体を前記金属容器内に把持することにより、セル構造体を圧縮性材料を介して金属容器内に収納把持したアッセンブリを組み立てる方法において、

組み立て工程に入る前に予め前記圧縮性材料の厚み及び/又は嵩密度に関する情報をその材料表面上に表示しておき、組み立て工程において、前記情報を読み取り、その情報に基づいて、適切な把持条件となるセル構造体と金属容器と圧縮性材料を選び出すことを特徴とする組み立て方法。

- 2. 前記情報の表示形式が文字である請求項1記載の組み立て方法。
- 3. 前記情報の表示形式がバーコードである請求項1記載の組み立て方法。
- 4. 前記情報をインクにより表示する請求項2又は3に記載の組み立て方法。
- 5. 前記情報をインクにより表示する方法が、インクジェット方法又は熱転写方法である請求項4記載の組み立て方法。
- 6. 前記情報をレーザーにより表示する請求項2又は3に記載の組み立て方法
- 7. 前記情報をスタンプで押印することにより表示する請求項2又は3に記載の組み立て方法。
- 8. 前記情報をラベルに印刷して前記材料表面上に貼付することにより表示する請求項2又は3に記載の組み立て方法。
- 9. 前記クッション性を有する圧縮性材料が、金属製ワイヤメッシュ、セラミック繊維とバーミキュライトで構成される加熱膨張性マット、セラミック繊維を主成分としバーミキュライトを含まない非加熱膨張性マットからなる群より選ばれた1種の材料又は2種以上の複合材料である請求項1ないし8のいずれか1項に記載の組み立て方法。
- 10. 前記金属容器内への前記セル構造体の収納、及び前記セル構造体へ前記

圧縮性材料を介して圧縮面圧を付与する方法が、クラムシェル方法、押し込み方法、巻き絞め方法、スウェージング方法、及び回転鍛造方法のうちのいずれかである請求項1ないし9のいずれか1項に記載の組み立て方法。

- 11. 前記セル構造体に触媒成分を担持した後に、該セル構造体を前記金属容器内に収納把持してなる請求項1ないし10のいずれか1項に記載の組み立て方法。
- 12. 前記セル構造体を前記金属容器内に収納把持した後に、該セル構造体に触媒成分を担持するようにした請求項1ないし10のいずれか1項に記載の組み立て方法。
- 13. 請求項1ないし12のいずれか1項に記載の組み立て方法により組み立てられたアッセンブリ。
- 14. 自動車排ガス浄化用触媒コンバータとして用いられる請求項13記載のアッセンブリ。
- 15. 前記セル構造体が、複数の隔壁により形成された複数のセル通路とそれを取り囲む外周壁を有するハニカム状構造体である請求項13又は14に記載のアッセンブリ。
- 16. 前記セル構造体が、フォーム状構造体である請求項13又は14に記載のアッセンブリ。
- 17. 前記セル構造体が、コージェライト、アルミナ、ムライト、リチウム・アルミニウム・シリケート、チタン酸アルミニウム、チタニア、ジルコニア、窒化珪素、窒化アルミニウム及び炭化珪素からなる群より選ばれた1種のセラミック材料又は2種以上のセラミック材料の複合物からなるものである請求項13ないし16のいずれか1項に記載のアッセンブリ。
- 18. 前記セル構造体が、活性炭、シリカゲル及びゼオライトからなる群より選ばれた1種の吸着材料からなるものである請求項13ないし16のいずれか1項に記載のアッセンブリ。
- 19. 複数のセル構造体を、セル通路方向に沿って1つの金属容器内にクッション性を有する圧縮性材料を介して直列に配列した請求項13ないし18のいず

れか1項に記載のアッセンブリ。

20. 1つのセル構造体を1つの金属容器内にクッション性を有する圧縮性材料を介して収納把持したアッセンブリを複数個、セル構造体のセル通路方向に沿って、1つの金属外筒内に直列に配列した請求項13ないし18のいずれか1項に記載のアッセンブリ。

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP01/10003

Y JP 9-314431 A (Fuji Oozx Inc.), 09 December, 1997 (09.12.1997), Full text (Family: none) Y JP 2000-45759 A (NGK Insulators, Ltd.), 1-20 15 February, 2000 (15.02.2000), Full text & December, 1999 (24.09.1999), abstract; Par. Nos. [0037], [0038] (Family: none) Y JP 63-7847 A (Toyota Motor Corporation), 13 January, 1988 (13.01.1988), page 2, lower left column, line 20 to lower right column, line 7 (Family: none) Y JP 7-47285 A (Toyota Motor Corporation), 21 February, 1995 (21.02.1995), Par. No. [0005] (Family: none) Further document adming the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance, including the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance in the published on or after the international filing date or priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "C" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "C" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other mans and comment referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other mans "B" document published prior to the international filing date but later the document published prior to the international filing date but later the priority date claimed in wention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone considered novel or cannot be considered to move an inventive step when the document is taken alone and the considered to exhibit the near the considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone and the considered to exhibit the publication but cited to exhibit the or more other such documents, such considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone and the priority claim to priority claim(s) or which is created to exhibit the publication but cited to exhibit the p	A 67 16			101/0101/10005	
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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT Category* Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages Relevant to claim Not Y JP 9-314431 A (Fuji Oozx Inc.), 09 December, 1997 (09.12.1997), Full text (Family: none) Y JP 2000-45759 A (NGK Insulators, Ltd.), 1-20 15 February, 2000 (15.02.2000), Full text & DE 19934531 A1 & FR 2781389 A1 Y JP 11-258013 A (Gastar Corporation), 24 September, 1999 (24.09.1999), abstract; Par. Nos. [0037], [0038] (Family: none) Y JP 63-7847 A (Toyota Motor Corporation), 13 January, 1988 (13.01.1988), page 2, lower left column, line 20 to lower right column, line 7 (Family: none) Y JP 7-47285 A (Toyota Motor Corporation), 21 February, 1995 (21.02.1995), Par. No. [0005] (Family: none) Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex. * Special categories of cited documents: "Considered to be of particular relevance carrier document but published prior to the international filing date or or considered to be of particular relevance carrier document but published or or after the international filing date or or considered to involve an inventive step when the document is calcument to particular relevance the claimed innermic amonot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is particular relevance; the claimed invention amonot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to involve an inventive step when the document is considered to	Koka	ai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971-2002	Jitsuyo Shina Toroku Jitsuy	an Toroku Koho 1996-2002 yo Shinan Koho 1994-2002	
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** Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, usc, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed Date of the actual completion of the international search 12 February, 2002 (12.02.02) Name and mailing address of the ISA/ Japanese Patent Office "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the claimed invention c	Y .	21 February, 1995 (21.02.1995)	_	12	
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reseptione 140.	Japanese Patent Office				
			Telephone No.		

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP01/10003

ategory*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No
Y	JP 9-158720 A (Toyota Motor Corporation), 17 June, 1997 (17.06.1997), abstract (Family: none)	16
Y	EP 918145 A2 (Nissan Motor Co., Ltd.), 26 May, 1999 (26.05.1999), column 6, lines 45 to 52; Fig. 4 & JP 11-210451 A Par. No. [0036]	18
Y	JP 2000-291424 A (Honda Motor Co., Ltd.), 17 October, 2000 (17.10.2000), Par. Nos. [0007] to [0009]; Fig. 1 (Family: none)	19
Y	JP 2000-204931 A (Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd.), 25 July, 2000 (25.07.2000), Par. Nos. [0029] to [0030]; Fig. 2 (Family: none)	20
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A. 発明の属する分野の分類(国際特許分類 (IPC))

Int. Cl' B23P 21/00, F01N 3/28

B. 調査を行った分野

調査を行った最小限資料(国際特許分類(IPC))

Int. Cl' B-23P 21/00, F01N 3/28

最小限資料以外の資料で調査を行った分野に含まれるもの

日本国実用新案公報

1926-1996年

日本国公開実用新案公報

1971-2002年

日本国実用新案登録公報

1996-2002年

日本国登録実用新案公報

1994-2002年

国際調査で使用した電子データベース (データベースの名称、調査に使用した用語)

C. 関連すると認められる文献		
引用文献の カテゴリー*		関連する 請求の範囲の番号
Y	JP 9-314431 A (フジオーゼックス株式会社) 199 7.12.09,全文 (ファミリーなし)	1-20
Y	JP 2000-45759 A (日本碍子株式会社) 2000. 02. 15,全文 & DE 19934531 A1 & FR 2781389 A1	1-20
Y	JP 11-258013 A (株式会社ガスター) 1999.09.24, 【要約】,段落【0037】,【0038】 (ファミリーなし)	1-20

区欄の続きにも文献が列挙されている。

□ パテントファミリーに関する別紙を参照。

* 引用文献のカテゴリー

- 「A」特に関連のある文献ではなく、一般的技術水準を示す もの
- 「E」国際出願日前の出願または特許であるが、国際出願日 以後に公表されたもの
- 「L」優先権主張に疑義を提起する文献又は他の文献の発行 日若しくは他の特別な理由を確立するために引用する 文献(理由を付す)
- 「O」口頭による開示、使用、展示等に言及する文献
- 「P」国際出願日前で、かつ優先権の主張の基礎となる出願

- の日の後に公表された文献
- 「T」国際出願日又は優先日後に公表された文献であって 出願と矛盾するものではなく、発明の原理又は理論 の理解のために引用するもの
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- 「Y」特に関連のある文献であって、当該文献と他の1以 上の文献との、当業者にとって自明である組合せに よって進歩性がないと考えられるもの
- 「&」同一パテントファミリー文献

国際調査を完了した日

12.02.02

国際調査報告の発送日

19.02.02

国際調査機関の名称及びあて先

日本国特許庁 (ISA/JP) 郵便番号100-8915 東京都千代田区霞が関三丁目4番3号 特許庁審査官 (権限のある職員) 中島 成

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電話番号 03-3581-1101 内線 3390

	国际制度報告	
C(続き).	関連すると認められる文献	日日・ホーンフ
引用文献の カテゴリー*	引用文献名 及び一部の箇所が関連するときは、その関連する箇所の表示	関連する 請求の範囲の番号
Y Y	JP 63-7847 A (トヨタ自動車株式会社) 1988. 0	11
	1.13,第2頁左下欄第20行-右下欄第7行目(ファミリーなし) し)	,
Y	JP 7-47285 A (トヨタ自動車株式会社) 1995.0 2.21,段落【0005】 (ファミリーなし)	12
Y	JP 9-158720 A (トヨタ自動車株式会社) 1997. 06.17, 【要約】 (ファミリーなし)	16
Y	EP 918145 A2 (NISSAN MOTOR CO., LTD.) 1999. 05. 26,第6欄第45行-第52行,第 4図 & JP 11-210451 A,段落【0036】	18
37	JP 2000-291424 A (本田技研工業株式会社) 20	1 9
Y	00.10.17,段落【0007】-【0009】,第1図(ファミリーなし)	
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Europäisches Patentamt European Patent Office Office européen des brevets



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(54) ASSEMBLY METHOD UTILIZING DISPLAY INFORMATION, AND ASSEMBLY FABRICATED BY THE ASSEMBLY METHOD

(57) There is provided an assembling method for an assembly in which a cell structure is housed and held in a metal vessel via a compressible material by arranging the compressible material having a cushioning property between the outer periphery of the cell structure and the tubular metal vessel in a compressed state and applying a mounting pressure to the cell structure via the compressible material to hold the cell structure in the metal vessel. Information regarding the thickness and/or bulk density of the compressible material has been marked

on the member surface prior to the start of an assembling process, the information is read in the assembling process, and a cell structure, a metal vessel, and a compressible material having a proper holding condition are selected based on the read information. Even if the external-shape dimension of the cell structure etc. constituting the assembly varies, the influence of variation can be made little, and a proper holding state without a fracture etc. of cell structure can be obtained easily.

Description

Technical Field

[0001] The present invention relates to an assembling method for an assembly in which a cell structure is housed and held in a metal vessel via a compressible material. More particularly, it relates to an assembling method for an assembly of members meeting a proper combination condition by marking inherent information on the surface of a member constituting the assembly in advance and by utilizing the information. The present invention can be applied to a catalyst carrier or a filter for purification of exhaust gas of internal combustion engine or for deodorization, or to a catalyst carrier or a filter used for chemical reaction equipment utilizing catalytic action, for example, a reformer for fuel cell.

Background Art

[0002] As an assembly used for a catalytic converter, a filter, a heat exchanger, or the like used for purification of exhaust gas of internal combustion engine or chemical reaction equipment utilizing catalytic action, there is known an assembly in which a cell structure is housed and held (canned) in a metal vessel by arranging a compressible material having a cushioning property between the cell structure and the tubular metal vessel (can) and by applying a predetermined mounting pressure to the cell structure via the compressible material. [0003] For example, in the case where such an assembly is used as a catalytic converter for purifying automobile exhaust gas, a precious metal such as platinum, palladium, or rhodium is dispersedly carried on a ceramic honeycomb structure, which is one kind of cell structure, as a catalyst component, and the honeycomb structure carrying the precious metal is housed and held in a metal vessel (can) via a ceramic mat etc. and is mounted on an exhaust system.

[0004] It is desirable that the cell structure have a high strength because it is held in the metal vessel by applying a mounting pressure onto the outer peripheral surface thereof as described above. For the honeycomb structure used as a catalyst carrier for purifying automobile exhaust gas, however, the thickness of cell wall has been decreased to improve the purification performance, and accordingly the strength level has been decreased.

[0005] The strength of cell'structure can be measured by an "isostatic fracture strength test". This test is conducted by putting a cell structure in a tubular rubber vessel, placing a cover of aluminum plate on the vessel, and performing isostatic compressing in water, and simulates the compressive load in the case where the outer peripheral surface of cell structure is held by the can of converter. The isostatic strength is designated by an applied pressure value at the time when the carrier is fractured, and is specified in Automobile Standards JASO

Standards M505-87 issued by Society of Automotive Engineers of Japan, Inc.

[0006] It has been found that it is generally very difficult for a ceramic honeycomb structure used as a catalyst carrier for an automobile exhaust gas purifying converter to keep an isostatic strength of 10 kg/cm² or higher if the cell wall thickness is 0.11 mm or smaller and the open area percentage exceeds 85%.

[0007] In the case where a specific pressure higher than a design specific pressure set at the time of canning design is produced in actual canning and the specific pressure exceeds the isostatic strength of cell structure in some portion, there is a danger that the structure fractures in that portion. As the thickness of cell wall of cell structure decreases and thus the strength level of structure decreases, the design specific pressure must be decreased, and thus it is necessary to restrain an abnormal rise in specific pressure in actual canning and to decrease the variations in specific pressure to the utmost. If the actual specific pressure is equal to the design specific pressure, intended canning design can be made ideally.

[0008] Further, the cell structure may be fractured in the case where because a gap between the cell structure and the metal vessel for containing the cell structure is irregular due to poor accuracy of external shape of cell structure, the compressive pressure acting on the outer peripheral portion of cell structure is nonuniform, so that a high holding specific pressure acts partially.

[0009] On the other hand, if the specific pressure is decreased too much, the cell structure cannot be kept being held in the metal vessel because the cell structure is subjected to a high-temperature exhaust gas flow or vibrations in actual service environments. Therefore, the necessary minimum specific pressure exists. As the wall thickness of cell structure decreases, the isostatic strength level of cell structure decreases, so that the mounting pressure for holding the cell structure must also be decreased to the utmost while the minimum specific pressure necessary for holding the cell structure is maintained. As the level of mounting pressure decreases, variations in specific pressure must be decreased, that is, more even specific pressure distribution must be provided.

[0010] In order to house and hold the cell structure in the metal vessel in a proper state, it is desirable to decrease the variations in size and shape of each part of the cell structure, the compressible material, and the metal vessel to the utmost. However, since the ceramic honeycomb structure used as a catalyst carrier as described above is dried as it is after being extrusion molded, and after being cut to a predetermined length, it is housed in the metal vessel in a state of being fired, the outside-diameter dimension of honeycomb structure involves dimensional variations and deformations in all processes of molding, drying, and firing. Therefore, the honeycomb structure has very large variations in size and shape as compared with a metal work. Therefore,

the problem is how the influence of outside-diameter dimension of ceramic honeycomb structure is kept little when the honeycomb structure is housed in the metal vessel.

[0011] The present invention has been made to solve the above problems, and accordingly an object thereof is to provide an assembling method in which when an assembly produced by housing and holding a cell structure in a metal vessel via a compressible material, even if the external-shape dimension of member such as the cell structure constituting the assembly has variations, the influence of variations is averted, and a proper holding state without a fracture etc. of cell structure can be obtained.

Disclosure of the Invention

[0012] According to the present invention, there is provided an assembling method for an assembly in which a cell structure is housed and held in a metal vessel via a compressible material by arranging the compressible material having a cushioning property between the outer periphery of the cell structure and the tubular metal vessel in a compressed state and applying a mounting pressure to the cell structure via the compressible material to hold the cell structure in the metal vessel, characterized by

marking an information regarding the thickness and/or bulk density of said compressible material on the material surface prior to the start of an assembling process, and reading said information in the assembling process, and a cell structure, a metal vessel, and selecting a compressible material which have a proper holding condition based on the read information (a first aspect of the present invention).

[0013] Further, according to the present invention, there is provided an assembly assembled by the above-described method (a second aspect of the present invention).

Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

[0014] As described above, an assembly used for a catalytic converter or the like, in which a cell structure is housed and held in a metal vessel via a compressible material, is assembled by arranging the compressible material having a cushioning property between the outer periphery of cell structure and the tubular metal vessel in a compressed state and by applying a mounting pressure to the cell structure via the compressible material to hold the cell structure in the metal vessel.

[0015] A first aspect of the present invention has a feature described below. In the above-described assembling method for the assembly, information regarding the thickness and/or the bulk density of the compressible material has been marked on the material's surface prior to the start of an assembling process, and in the assembling process, the information is read, and

a cell structure, a metal vessel and the compressible material which have a proper holding condition are selected based on the read information.

[0016] As a factor that exerts an influence on the specific pressure of the cell structure, the thickness and/or bulk density of the compressible material arranged between the cell structure and the metal vessel can be cited in addition to the dimensions of the cell structure and the metal vessel. As described above, based on the information regarding these factors which is marked on the material surface, a cell structure, a metal vessel, and a compressible material which provide a combination of proper dimensions are selected, by which the cell structure housed and held in the metal vessel is subjected to a specific pressure in a proper range.

[0017] In the first aspect of the present invention, as the marking format of information, characters or a bar code can be used. The information can be marked by ink application, laser, stamping using a stamp, or the like. Alternatively, the information may be printed on a label, and the label may be affixed onto the material's surface. In the case where the information is marked by ink, the ink jet method or thermal transfer method is preferably used.

[0018] As the compressible material having a cushioning property, one kind of material or a composite material consisting of two or more kinds of materials selected from a group consisting of a metallic wire mesh, an intumescent mat formed by ceramic fiber and vermiculite, and non-intumescent mat mainly containing ceramic fiber and not containing vermiculite is preferably used. [0019] Especially when the cell structure is a thin wall construction, if a non-intumescent mat mainly containing ceramic fiber such as alumina, high alumina, mullite, silicon carbide, silicon nitride, zirconia, and titania and not containing an intumescent material such as vermiculite is used, a compressive force acting on the outer periphery of cell structure in the practical temperature range does not vary greatly, and moreover the compressive force preferably acts on the whole of the outer periphery of cell structure substantially uniformly.

[0020] As a method for housing the cell structure in the metal vessel and applying a mounting pressure to the cell structure via the compressible material, any of the clamshell method, stuffing method, tourniquet method, swaging method, and rotary forging method is preferably used.

[0021] As a cell structure, a honeycomb structure having a plurality of cell passages formed by a plurality of walls, the thickness of cell wall being 0.11 mm or smaller, and the open area percentage being 85% or more, is preferable. Further, as a honeycomb structure, a structure having an external wall forming an outside-diameter contour around the structure, the thickness of external wall being at least 0.05 mm, is preferable. As a cell structure used in the present invention, in addition to the above-described honeycomb structure, a foamed structure may be used.

[0022] The cell structure is preferably formed of one kind of ceramic material or a composite consisting of two or more kinds of ceramic materials selected from a group consisting of cordierite, alumina, mullite, lithium aluminum silicate, aluminum titanate, titania, zirconia, silicon nitride, aluminum nitride, and silicon carbide. Also, the cell structure formed of one kind of adsorbing material selected from a group consisting of activated carbon, silica gel, and zeolite can be used suitably.

[0023] The cell shape of honeycomb structure manufactured by extrusion molding may be triangular, quadrangular, hexagonal, round, etc. Generally, the honeycomb structure having a square shape, which is one of quadrangular shapes, is often used, and in recent years, the honeycomb structure having a hexagonal shape has been used increasingly.

[0024] In the case where the cell structure is used as a catalytic converter, a catalyst component must be carried on the cell structure. Usually, after the catalyst component is carried on the cell structure, the cell structure is housed and held in the metal vessel. However, the method may be such that after the cell structure is housed and held in the metal vessel, the catalyst component is carried on the cell structure.

[0025] A second aspect of the present invention provides an assembly assembled by the method in accordance with the first aspect of the present invention. Since the cell structure is held in the metal vessel with a proper mounting pressure, the assembly can be used suitably for a catalytic converter for purifying automobile exhaust gas and other applications.

[0026] The assembly may be constructed so that a plurality of cell structures are arranged in series along the cell passage direction in one metal vessel via a compressible material having a cushioning property. Also, a plurality of assemblies each of which houses and holds one cell structure in one metal vessel via a compressible material having a cushioning property are arranged in series along the cell passage direction of the cell structure in one metallic outer casing. In the present invention, however, the size of metal vessel is changed according to the outside-diameter dimension of individual honeycomb structure. Therefore, in the case where a plurality of metal vessels are connected to each other. It is desirable to connect the metal vessels that have a size as close as possible to each other.

[Example]

[0027] Hereunder, the present invention will be described in detail giving an example of the case where a catalytic converter is manufactured by using a honcycomb structure as a cell structure. The present invention is not limited to this example.

[0028] As a method for marking information such as characters or a bar code on a compressible material, a method using an ink jet printer is desirable in terms of treatment of large quantities of members because this

method has a high printing speed and is of non-contact type. In particular, a marking method using a laser is preferable to the ink jet method in terms of maintenance because this method does not require ink and pretreatment.

[0029] The bulk density inspection of compressible material is carried out at the final stage of manufacturing process. For example, when the information is marked by ink jet, the information regarding the measured bulk density is transmitted directly to the ink jet printer.

[0030] One example of conditions in the case where the information is marked by ink jet will be described below. Also, for reference, one example of conditions in the case where the information is marked by stamping and label affixture will be described additionally.

[Example of ink jet]

[0031]

Ink jet device:

S4 Plus manufactured by Imaje Ltd.

5 • Type of ink:

Heat resisting ink (at ordinary temperature: dark brown colored, after heat treatment: orange colored)

Compressible material:

Non-intumescent mat consisting mainly ceramic fiber

Format of information carried on compressible material:

Numeral

Information carried on compressible material:

Bulk density of compressible material

15 [Example of stamping]

[0032]

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Ink component:

(1) Ink pigment

Fine powder of cobalt oxide (CoO), chromium oxide (Cr_2O_3), and iron oxide (Fe_2O_3) 40% (color: black at ordinary temperature and after heat treatment)

(2) Synthetic resin: 50%

(3) Water: 10%

Compressible material:

Non-intumescent mat consisting mainly ceramic fiber

Format of information carried on compressible material:

Numeral

Information carried on compressible material:

Bulk density of compressible material

[Example of label affixation]

[0033]

Printer:

S4 Plus manufactured by Imerge Ltd.

Type of ink:

Ordinary ink (black)

· Compressible material:

Non-intumescent mat consisting mainly ceramic fiber

 Format of information carried on compressible material:

Bar code (numeral is put additionally)

Information carried on compressible material:

Bulk density of compressible material

[0034] In a canning process, the bar code or numerals that carry the information regarding the outside-diameter dimension of honeycomb structure and the thickness and/or bulk density of compressible material are read by a bar-code reader or the like in advance. The read dimensional information is sent momentarily to the metal vessel manufacturing line. The metal vessel is formed by rounding a thin metal sheet to a predetermined dimension by using a press jig and by joining the joint portions by welding to form a can shape. The aforementioned information is sent to the can manufacturing device, and the dimension of can is determined based on this information. Thus, the clearance between the honeycomb structure and the metal vessel (can) is controlled, and the optimum combination is realized.

[0035] The specific pressure also varies depending on the bulk density of compressible material interposed between the honeycomb structure and the metal vessel.

Therefore, in order to obtain the optimum combination of the clearance between the honeycomb structure and the metal vessel and the bulk density of compressible material, the metal vessel and the compressible material can be selected based on the bar-code information on the honeycomb structure.

[0036] When the character information can be printed by the ink jet method, the laser marking method or the like. In this case, the printed character information is photographed by a CCD camera, and is recognized by the pattern matching method. This method is to register characters in advance and to select a pattern closest to the registered characters from the shading information of photographed characters. The inventors read the outside-diameter dimension marked by the aforementioned laser marking method and the numerical information about mass by using an F350 image recognizer manufactured by Omron Corp., and verified that the information could be transmitted correctly.

[0037] The reading principle of bar-code reader is as described below. A laser beam is irradiated on a bar-code label, and the irregularly reflected light is received by the light-intercepting portion of bar-code reader. The irregularly reflected light produces a difference in intensity due to a difference in reflectance between space and bar. By changing this difference to an ON/OFF digital signal, the space and bar are discriminated, whereby the bar code is read. Therefore, even in the case of bar code, when the difference in intensity of irregularly reflected light (PCS) is small, it is difficult to read the bar code using the bar-code reader, so that the aforementioned image recognizing method is effective.

[0038] As a general canning method, any method of the clamshell method, the stuffing method, or the tourniquet method is used. Besides, a method in which the outside-diameter dimension of the metal vessel is decreased by applying a compressive pressure from the outside via a tap (pressurizing type) using the technology for plastic working of metal (swaging method) is also carried out.

[0039] Further, by using a method in which the outer peripheral surface of the metal vessel is pressed by plastic working using a working jig while the metal vessel is rotated (what is called a rotary forging method), the outside diameter of the metal vessel can be decreased, and thus a specific pressure can be applied. By the use of this method, in combination with the working in which both ends of can are drawn into a cone shape by spinning, which has been done recently, working ranging from canning to cone forming can be performed on an integrated working line.

[0040] In the above-described clamshell method, stuffing method, and toruniquet method, a compressive elasticity holding material (compressible material) is wound around the honeycomb structure in advance. In the clamshell method, the honeycomb structure with the compressible material being wound is held by a two-piece metal vessel while a load is applied, and the joint

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face (collar) portions are welded to form an integrated vessel. In the stuffing method, the honeycomb structure with the compressible material being wound is pressed into an integrated metal vessel by using a guide. In the tourniquet method, a metal plate serving as the metal vessel is wound around the honeycomb structure with the compressible material being wound and is pulled to provide a specific pressure, and the joint portions of the metal plate are welded and fixed.

[0041] According to the clamshell method, when the honeycomb structure is pressed from the upside and downside, a shift of mat (compressive material) occurs. In the stuffing method, when the honeycomb structure is inserted into the metal vessel, a shift of mat occurs on the insertion side. Therefore, if the shifted portion spreads to a wide range, the specific pressure increases as a whole as well.

[0042] A method suitable for applying a specific pressure is to hold the honeycomb structure in the metal vessel while a specific pressure is applied with a shift of relative position of the mat and the metal vessel being made as small as possible. From this point of view, the tourniquet method, swaging method, and rotary forging method are desirable because the can surrounds the cell structure wound with the compressible material prior to the application of a specific pressure so that the shift of relative position of the can and the compressible material is small. A procedure can also be carried out in which the stuffing method is used only to arrange the honeycomb structure in the can and the swaging method or the rotary forging method is used to apply a specific pressure.

Industrial Applicability

[0043] As described above, according to the present invention, when an assembly in which a cell structure is housed and held in a metal vessel via a compressible material, even if the external-shape dimension of the cell structure etc. constituting the assembly varies, the influence of variation can be made little, and a proper holding state without a fracture etc. of cell structure can be obtained easily.

Claims

An assembling method for an assembly in which a
cell structure is housed and held in a metal vessel
via a compressible material by arranging said compressible material having a cushioning property between the outer periphery of said cell structure and
said tubular metal vessel in a compressed state and
applying a mounting pressure to said cell structure
via said compressible material to hold said cell
structure in said metal vessel, characterized by

marking an information regarding the thickness and/or bulk density of said compressible material on the material surface prior to the start of an assembling process, and reading said information in the assembling process, and a cell structure, a metal vessel, and selecting a compressible material which have a proper holding condition based on the read information.

- The assembling method according to claim 1, wherein a marking format of said information is characters.
- The assembling method according to claim 1, wherein a marking format of said information is a bar code.
- The assembling method according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said information is marked by ink.
- The assembling method according to claim 4, wherein the method for marking said information by ink is an ink jet method or a thermal transfer method.
- **6.** The assembling method according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said information is marked by a laser.
- The assembling method according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said information is marked by stamping using a stamp.
- 30 8. The assembling method according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said information is marked by a method in which said information is printed on a label, and said label is affixed onto said member surface.
- The assembling method according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein said compressible material having a cushioning property is one kind of material or a composite material consisting of two or more kinds of materials selected from a group consisting of a metallic wire mesh, an intumescent mat formed by ceramic fiber and vermiculite, and non-intumescent mat mainly containing ceramic fiber and not containing vermiculite.
 - 10. The assembling method according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein a method for housing said cell structure in said metal vessel and applying a mounting pressure to said cell structure via said compressible material is any of a clamshell method, a stuffing method, a tourniquet method, a swaging method, and a rotary forging method.
 - 11. The assembling method according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein after a catalyst component is carried on said cell structure, said cell structure is housed and held in said metal vessel.
 - 12. The assembling method according to any one of

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claims 1 to 10, wherein after said cell structure is housed and held in said metal vessel, a catalyst component is carried on said cell structure.

- An assembly which is assembled by the assembling method as recited in any one of claims 1 to 12.
- 14. The assembly according to claim 13, wherein said assembly is used as a catalytic converter for purifying automobile exhaust gas.

15. The assembly according to claim 13 or 14, wherein said cell structure is a honeycomb structure having a plurality of cell passages formed by a plurality of walls and an outer peripheral wall surrounding said cell passages.

16. The assembly according to claim 13 or 14, wherein said cell structure is a foamed structure.

17. The assembly according to any one of claims 13 to 16, wherein said cell structure is formed of one kind of ceramic material or a composite consisting of two or more kinds of ceramic materials selected from a group consisting of cordierite, alumina, mullite, lithium aluminum silicate, aluminum titanate, titania, zirconia, silicon nitride, aluminum nitride, and silicon carbide.

18. The assembly according to any one of claims 13 to 16, wherein said cell structure is formed of one kind of adsorbing material selected from a group consisting of activated carbon, silica gel, and zeolite.

19. The assembly according to any one of claims 13 to 18, wherein a plurality of cell structures are arranged in series along a cell passage direction in one metal vessel via the compressible material having a cushioning property.

20. The assembly according to any one of claims 13 to 18, wherein a plurality of assemblies each of which houses and holds one cell structure in one metal vessel via the compressible material having a cushioning property are arranged in series along the cell passage direction of said cell structure in one metallic outer casing.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP01/10003

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER				
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According to	o International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both na	ational classification ar	nd IPC	
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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person stilled in the art				
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later "&" document member of the same patent family				
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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